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## Viewing cable 08LONDON1311, UK REAFFIRMS LONG-TERM PRESENCE IN IRAQ; PRAISES

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Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
08LONDON1311	2008-05-09 16:18	2011-08-30 01:44	SECRET//NOFORN	Embassy London

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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 001311

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/05/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [IZ](#) [AF](#) [UK](#)  
SUBJECT: UK REAFFIRMS LONG-TERM PRESENCE IN IRAQ; PRAISES  
PM MALIKI'S NEW CONFIDENCE

REF: LONDON 1241

¶1. (S/NF) Summary. During their meetings with Secretary of State for Defense Des Browne and FCO Political Director Mark Lyall Grant, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Ryan Crocker and the Commanding General of MNF-I General David Petraeus were reassured that the UK was in Iraq "long-term" and had temporarily halted its drawdown from Basra. Both sides expressed satisfaction with developments in the south and PM Maliki's improving confidence, and the Council of Representative's focus on pressing issues of elections and hydrocarbons legislation. The U.S. and UK will continue to coordinate on Strategic Framework/SOFA negotiations with the Iraqi government. Joining Browne was Chief of Defense Staff Jock Stirrup and UK Ambassador to Iraq Christopher Prentice. Ambassador Tuttle and the DATT accompanied Petraeus and Crocker to the meeting with Browne, and the DCM accompanied Crocker to the meeting with Lyall Grant.

#### Overview of Basra

¶2. (S/NF) Defense Secretary Browne noted that "after a shaky start" in the wake of the recent offensive by Iraqi security services, the situation in Basra is beginning to stabilize. Petraeus agreed that the speed with which the decision was reached to begin the offensive left little time for coalition preparation, and expressed appreciation to Browne for the UK's role in enabling Iraqi success in the operation. Petraeus emphasized that there were a number of lessons to be drawn from the Basra operation, most notably the value of transition teams and armed UAVs. Brown returned the thanks for U.S. military support, and emphasized the need to sustain momentum and build upon the security gains in the province. Brown was hopeful that investors would start to look more closely at the south, citing interest expressed by a number of business executives during a recent HMG sponsored investors conference tied to the Basra Development Fund program. Browne said oil industry executives in particular are not averse to operating in high-risk environments, but the security situation needs to be quantified more precisely for their decision-making processes. Petraeus concurred, adding that a key step would be for the Iraqi Ministry of Finance to underwrite some of the risk to compensate for the lack of protections under the current legal system.

¶3. (S/NF) Looking forward, Browne said the UK will be focusing on enhancing its divisional headquarters, completing the training and generation of the Iraqi Army 14 Division, continuing naval training, and sustaining and improving security operations at Basra Airport and the Contingency Operating Base. He noted that the British "remain committed to a long-term presence in Basra," and that the military drawdown had "paused" at 4,100 personnel, but that the commitment, particularly force levels and tasks after the expiration of the UNSCR at the end of the year, would need to be "revisited" with an eye to the future prior to the UK Parliament's recess in late July.

#### Maliki's Confidence

¶4. (S/NF) Browne said that the U.S. and UK will need to temper PM Maliki's "new confidence" to keep his focus on consolidating gains in Basra, as opposed to launching sudden new military operations elsewhere, such as in Maysan. Crocker concurred, noting that Maliki came back from Basra determined to launch an operation in Mosul

concurrent with ongoing efforts to take control of Sadr City. Maliki has been talked out of it for now, but will, for political reasons, feel the need to revisit the possibility soon.

15. (S/NF) Crocker said that the perception of Maliki as a decisive leader improved across all spectra of Iraqi society after the Basra operation. The fact that he was willing to come down hard on Shia militia has broadened his support base. Recent Sunni opposition to Al Qaida in Iraq

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(AQI) has built Shia confidence, allowing the legitimate political process to gain momentum, and the Council of Representatives to focus more closely on much needed legislation and the fall elections. Crocker also noted that talks with the government on post-UNSCR/SOFA and Strategic Framework issues were proceeding, and added that it would be difficult to predict an end date for such complicated and technical negotiations. Lyall Grant and Crocker reaffirmed the commitment for close U.S.-UK coordination as the negotiations proceed.

#### Regional Considerations

16. (S/NF) Petraeus outlined efforts for retraining and strengthening the Iraqi Army 14 Division, noted that some of the units that performed poorly at the start of the operation were already back in the line with new replacements, and underlined the confidence close air support gives the troops. He also complemented MND-SE on the speed at which it reoriented its headquarters and force to support operations in Basra. He noted that an Iraqi-led operation in Maysan to address arms and insurgent activity on the Iranian border may be possible. He related that PM Maliki has sent a delegation to Tehran armed with U.S. intelligence and evidence of Iranian arms and insurgent training -- the results of that visit will play a part in decisions on how to deal with Iran's involvement in Iraq. Crocker added that he believes, and Maliki agrees, it is more productive to deal with Iran-Iraq issues separately from other Iran-West issues, such as nuclear weapons ambitions.

17. (S/NF) Lyall Grant emphasized the differences between efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq, including malign Iranian influence. He said that in Iraq, Iran had a true strategic interest in influencing political and security developments, while in Afghanistan, its goal is more tactical -- an effort to disrupt Coalition efforts. Therefore, Lyall Grant continued, there may be more opportunities to convince Iran to alter its behavior vis-a-vis Afghanistan. Crocker added that it may be more beneficial for Iraqi officials, rather than the U.S. or UK, to appeal to Tehran to halt Iran's destabilizing impact. Lyall Grant agreed, noting the recent groundswell of negative Iraqi public opinion against Iran may have an impact on Tehran's behavior.

18. (S/NF) Crocker said the U.S. is working hard to encourage Iraq's neighbors, particularly Saudi Arabia, to provide more economic and political support, including an exchange of ambassadors. Joint UK and U.S. efforts to engage with Kuwait on border and trade issues will also hopefully pay off soon, particularly on reduction of trade barriers.

19. (U) Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus have cleared this cable.  
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